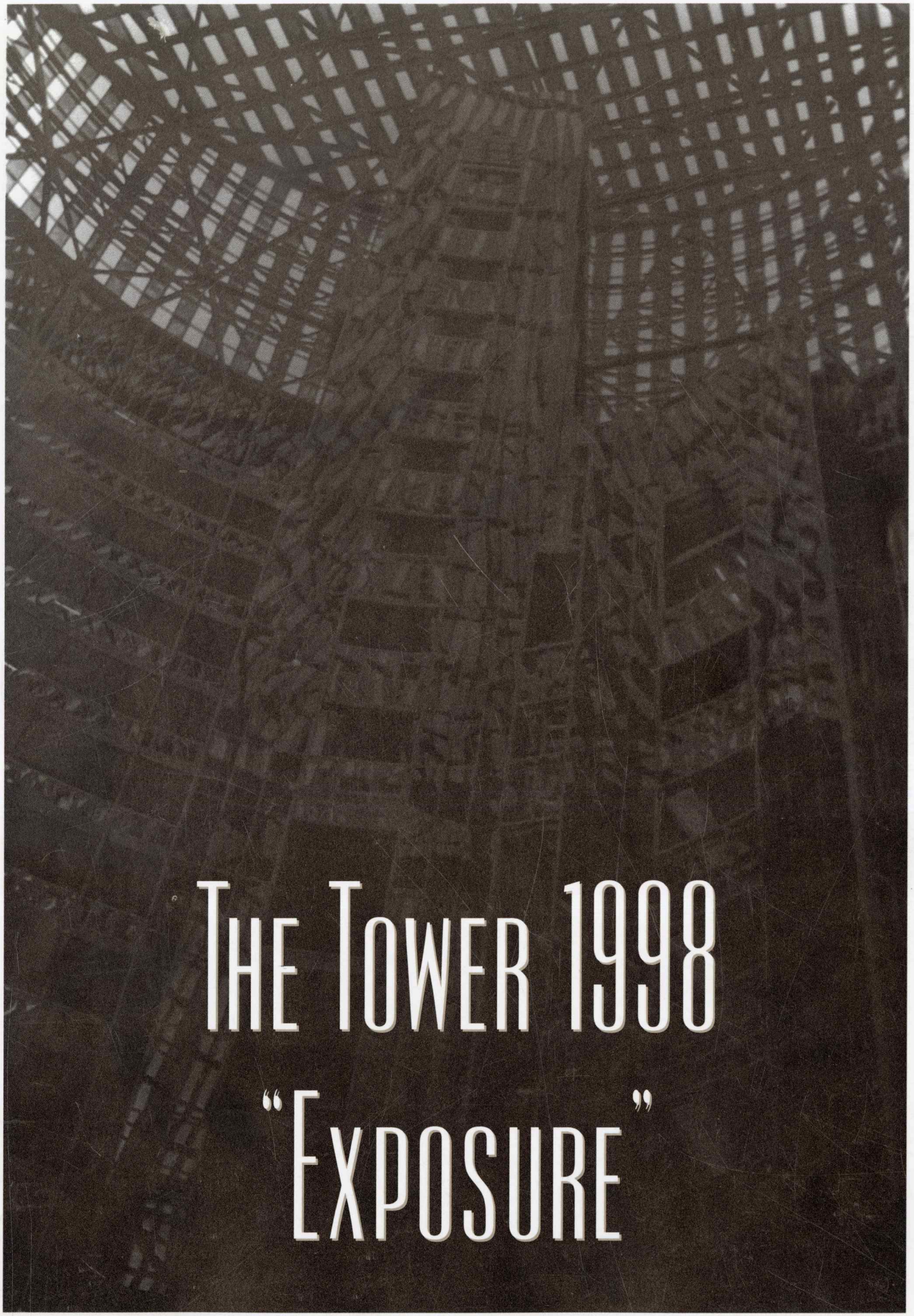

The Tower 1998

"Exposure"

Untitled Photo
Deena Haynes

The Tower 1998
"Exposure"

The Tower

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From the Editor. . .

I would like to take a brief moment to thank all the people who helped to make the *1998 Tower* possible. First of all, I would like to thank my staff and all the students who submitted work for consideration. Without the hard work of the UM students, none of this would have been possible.

A special extension of gratitude is also given to Cynthia Shackelford, Diane Kennedy-Jackson, and Earline Howell. Their support and direction helped the magazine come together smoothly. They also have a truly unique drive to make all the student publications on this campus a tremendous success.

Finally, I would like to thank all the faculty and staff who encouraged students to submit work to the *Tower*. Without your help in spreading the word, many of the items included in these pages may not have been submitted at all.

Sincerely,
Alice C. Bickley,
1998 Editor

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Untitled Photo
Alan Cecil

Bad Little Girls Go to Florida when They Die

The train wrobbled on
Past the sand bordered lake
And the dizzying rows of orange trees.
And the passengers smelled
In the front of the car.

Satan, my soul for a breeze!

The baby of the young wife
Was wet and began to wail
The car grew small and rattled on
And I closed my eyes to this hell.

I saw Myself on a dirt road
That led through the trees to a lake
The water was real, as was the soil,
But the sky and the sun were fake.

Myself looked in the green depths to see
A little fish that has died
And a loneful face in angel web
And I fell to my knees and cried.

Becky Garza
UM B.S. 1971
1949-1996

Submitted by Dr. Gene Garza
In Loving Memory of his wife

moving
brick-walk, alone
overshadowed by trees
that never betrayed their names
I become:
singular, muted
defined

By Jeremy Lespi

tiny moth
what do you see?
the T.V.? my love? me?
fly or stay -
either way
you'll be dead by sunrise

By Jeremy Lespi

said death

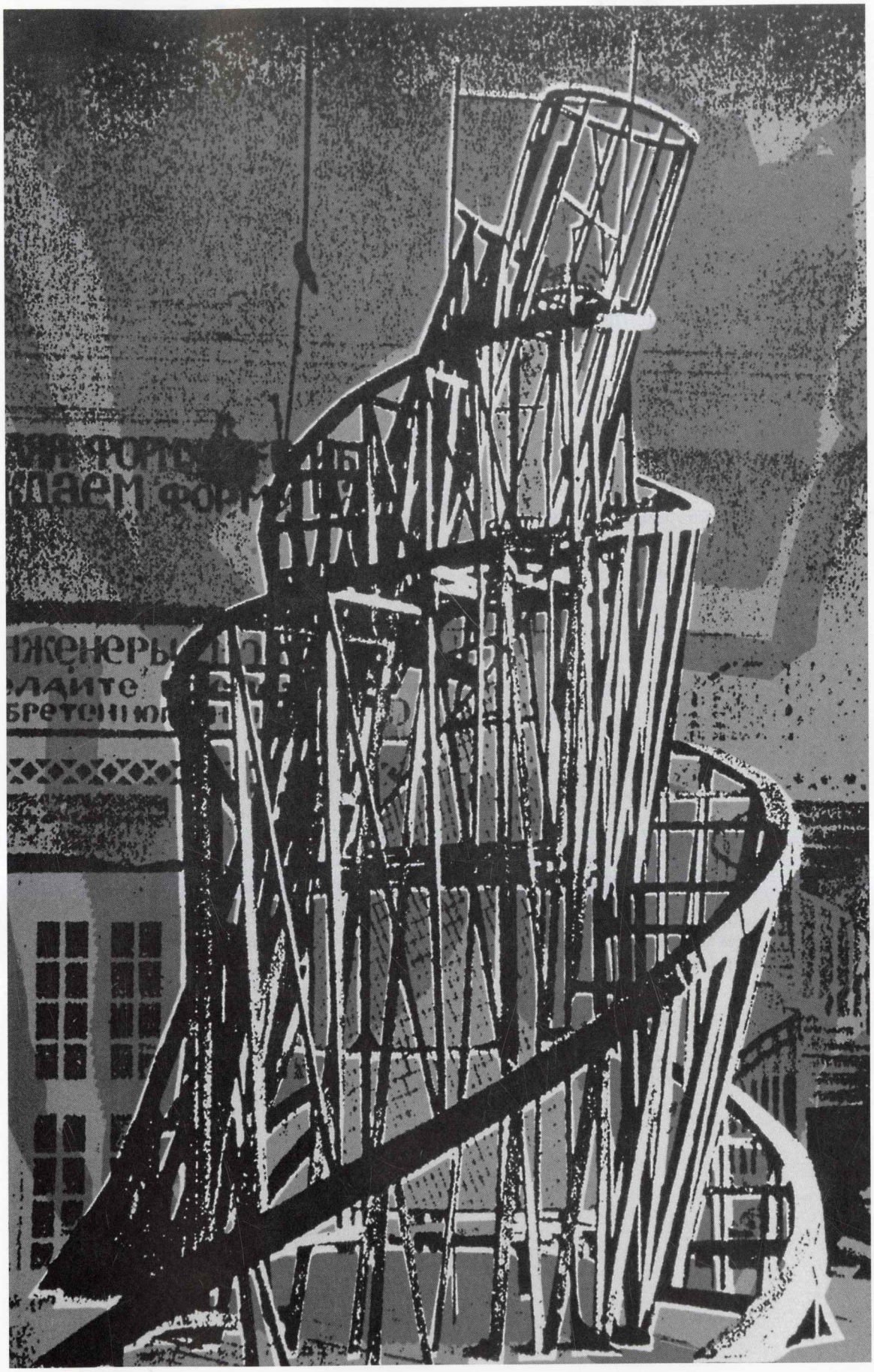
strands of hair
in my eye
was almost
tragic you
said yea almost
I
said death

"Che morte piu dolce
Che morire per amore!"

your fingers
desperate face
that kissed my gaze
you
fly the room
but I remain

I
honestly wanted
this:
your lips.

By Jeremy Lespi



Untitled Drawing
Patrick Mayton

Jim Beam Dreams

What do you see in a Jim Beam dream
With the smell of Coke still in your nose?

Do you screw slutty whores in short skirts
Who provide kinky handcuffs and colorful condoms?
Do you smell the scent of choice-cut steaks
And plump Cuban cigars in a golden slide case?
Or do you imagine the up-chuck taste of butter pecan,
Bad liquor, and bitter stomach bile?

What do you see in a Jim Beam dream
With the dripping shot glass still clutched in hand?

Do you feel the sticky fumbling of high school foreplay
In your living room floor after smoking a joint?
Do you gorge on chocolate dipped strawberries
From a gourmet Godiva shop on Valentine's Day?
Or do you sleep with your arms around the porcelain throne
And blue toilet water splashed in your face?

By Alice Bickley

Le Rêve

J'entends votre voix.
Comme le vent
Ça m'embrasse.
Je tourne,
Mais vous n'êtes pas
ici.

Quand retournerez-vous?

Je vois vos yeux.
Comme la mer
Ils me noyent.
Je halete,
Mais vous n'êtes pas
ici.

Les heures sont les mois.

Je vous regarde.
Comme le soleil
Vous me chauffez.
Je souris,
Mais vous n'êtes pas
ici.

Les jours sont les années.

Je vous attends.
Comme une enfant
Je deviens impatiente.

Soudain, mon âme s'éveille
Comme le printemps après l'hiver.
Je tourne,
et
vous êtes
ici.

The Dream

I hear your voice.
Like the wind
It embarasses me.
I turn,
But you are not
here.

When will you return?

I see your eyes.
Like the sea
They drown me.
I gasp,
But you are not
here.

The hours are months.

I look at you.
Like the sun
You warm me.
I smile,
But you are not
here.

The days are years.

I wait for you.
Like a child
I grow impatient.

Suddenly, my soul awakens
Like the spring after the winter.
I turn,
and
You are
here.

By Elizabeth Firzlaff

Ostrich Jockey

"Tell me more," you say.
Well, what do you want to know?
That I'm sitting, splayed on the back of a runaway ostrich
Out of control, hanging on for dear life.
And you're standing at the finishing line, smirking through those navy blue eyes,
Holding in wicker my leaky heart
But my ride is heading in the opposite direction.

"Tell me more," you say.
Well, what should I say?
That no matter how hard I try,
How far I walk, or how fast I fly,
You are the horizon, far-fetched and everlong.
And I can never touch you.

"Tell me more," you say.
This well is dry, all right?
I've said all there is!
This door is closed, this glass is empty.
It's me, the ostrich jockey, the ne'er-do-well plane.
No touch, nothing; I can't even tell you.

By Jennifer S. Tibbs

Ice Cold Blue

Ice cold blue eyes infused me,
        with warmth & caring unknown.
Northern breezes blew through me,
        held me up & never let me go.
Chisel & hammer confused me,
        made me myself in your eyes.
Warm lips included me,
        held my breath with your sighs.
Your two hands held me,
        then crushed my hopes in two.
Words cut me, spliced me like an axe,
        to a childlike size I am hewn.
Strong arms once surrounded me,
        but unfortunately they weren't home.
Two legs carried you away from me,
        and suddenly I was alone.

By Jennifer S. Tibbs

Untitled Photo
Alan Cecil

Scene #2 (Babs and Bubba)

by D. Michelle Tidmore

The scene opens in the restaurant Chez Michele. Babs is waiting to be seated. She is a tall woman with brown hair that has been impeccably fixed. She is dressed in a black Liz Claiborne suit. She spots her date and starts to leave, unfortunately the waiter comes to seat her. Her date is a short, stocky man named Bubba. He has a receding hairline even though he is only 22 years old. He is dressed in cowboy boots and overalls with a flannel shirt. The waiter seats her.

BABS
(nervously) Hello. I'm Babs.

BUBBA
(Bubba extends hid hand which she takes reluctantly, then he speaks with a very thick, Southern accent.)
Hi. I'm Bubba. I done did order us some grub. Ya don't care, do ya?

BABS
Huh. . . No. Not at all. Do you mind me asking what you have ordered?

BUBBA
Well, I got us some veal. I hope ya like that stuff. By the way, you's a lot purtier than Jimmy Joe told me. Between me and you, I thinks he was just jealous cause ya woodent go out with him. I can't says I blame ya.

BABS
Well, thank you. . . Bubba. I really didn't know what to expect when Jimmy Joe said that he was setting me up with his, uh, cutest cousin. I must say I'm surprised. (She flashes a smile but with gritted teeth).

BUBBA
Why thanks, Babs. He, he, ha, ha! Guess what I just thought? You're name's Babs just like Babs Bunny on Tiny Toons cartoons. Would ya mind if I called ya that, Babs Bunny? Do you know what? When you gos huntin for rabbit you lay out traps. The rabbit gits caught in them and you bash in their heads. Then ya skin'em and cook'em. I got me some rabbit's feet key chains if ya want one. Rabbit is my favorite meat.

BABS
(Trying to be polite) I'm so glad to hear that. Oh, our food is coming.

The waiter brings the food out to them. This is a moment of escape for Babs, because she thinks he won't talk with his mouth full (at least, she hopes he won't).

BABS
(Waiter puts plate before her) Doesn't everything look so lovely? I can't wait to taste it.

BUBBA

Me, neither. Do you know what we was taught in Western Civ. today? We was taught that during the early time in France the rich would have large feasts. They would stuff themselves, puke it up, and then eat it agin. Sounds cool, don't it?

BABS

Yes, it sounds just peachy keen. Bubba, would you mind if we didn't converse on that subject at the dinner table? (Searching for a polite comment) It just sounds so, um, interesting that I don't want to miss any details while eating.

BUBBA

Well, that's just fine my sweet lil Babs Bunny. Ha! Ha! That is jest the best name for ya. (He begins to cut his veal) Hey do you want to know how ya get this here veal? When a calf is borned, ya put it inside a crate with holes for its head and legs. Ya do that so's the meat don't git rough. Then ya bash in its head, just like them there rabbits. 'Cept you don't skin it. Ya might get some nice boots later, though. Anyways, they rip it open and get all the meat out. Blood gits all over the place. Sometimes it's fun to take out the guts and other slimy stuff and throw it at yur friends. You should see mom's face when those spleens hit her in the eye. She used to git after me with a hickry switch, but I can run faster than that old nag any day.

BABS

(Mustering a frightened smile, like a deer caught in headlights) That sounds very interesting.

BUBBA

Would you listen at me! I've just sat here and talked about nothing but me, me, me! Tell me about yourself. How in the hell did you and Jimmy Joe get to be friends anyway? You's way too classy for him.

BABS

(Relieved) There is not much to say. I was born and reared in Alabama. I went to a junior college for two years and then decided to go to a four-year university to get my B.F.A in theatre. I met Jimmy Joe in my English class. The professor asked me to tutor him. He paid me a small salary, but trying to teach Jimmy Joe about the symbolism in John Donne's poetry was as difficult as trying to convince the Pope to become a Hindu. (She chuckled slightly, but Bubba didn't seem to get the joke) Anyway, Jimmy Joe asked me out several times, and I turned him down. He said that he had a "real, cute cousin that I know's you would have a hankerin for." I didn't want to hurt his feelings, so I decided to meet you if only to get him to stop askin (catches her mistake). I mean asking.

BUBBA

Yeah, that ole Jimmy Joe can bug the hell out of ya. (Pause) What's yur major, agin?

BABS

My major is in theatre arts with an English minor. I plan to continue my education at NYU and work toward my M.F.A. I am also going to be an alum for my sorority. It will. . . .

BUBBA
(interrupts) You's in a sorority? That reminds me of the time that I went to one of those fraternity parties. I got so drunk that I threw up all over this little cheerleader gal. I musta passed out after that 'cause I woke up next to an awful looking white goat the next mornin'. All my clothes was missin' and I had a headache this big (extends his hands out like an Excedrin commercial and laughs at his imitation).

BABS
(Faking another sweet smile) Wow Bubba. You have led a really intriguing life, now haven't you? How did you decide to come to college?

BUBBA
Well, to tell ya the truth, I didn't gradiate high school. I was a real good football player, though. Some coach told me to come on up here and play ball. In exchange, I'm suppose to git some sort of degree or somethin'. I sure hope he wasn't lyin' 'cause he made me give up smoking my grandaddy's ole corncob pipe.

BABS
Did that coach happen to have any mental problems?

BUBBA
Ya know! I'm not real sure about that. (With a puzzled look) Maybe? Why you ask?

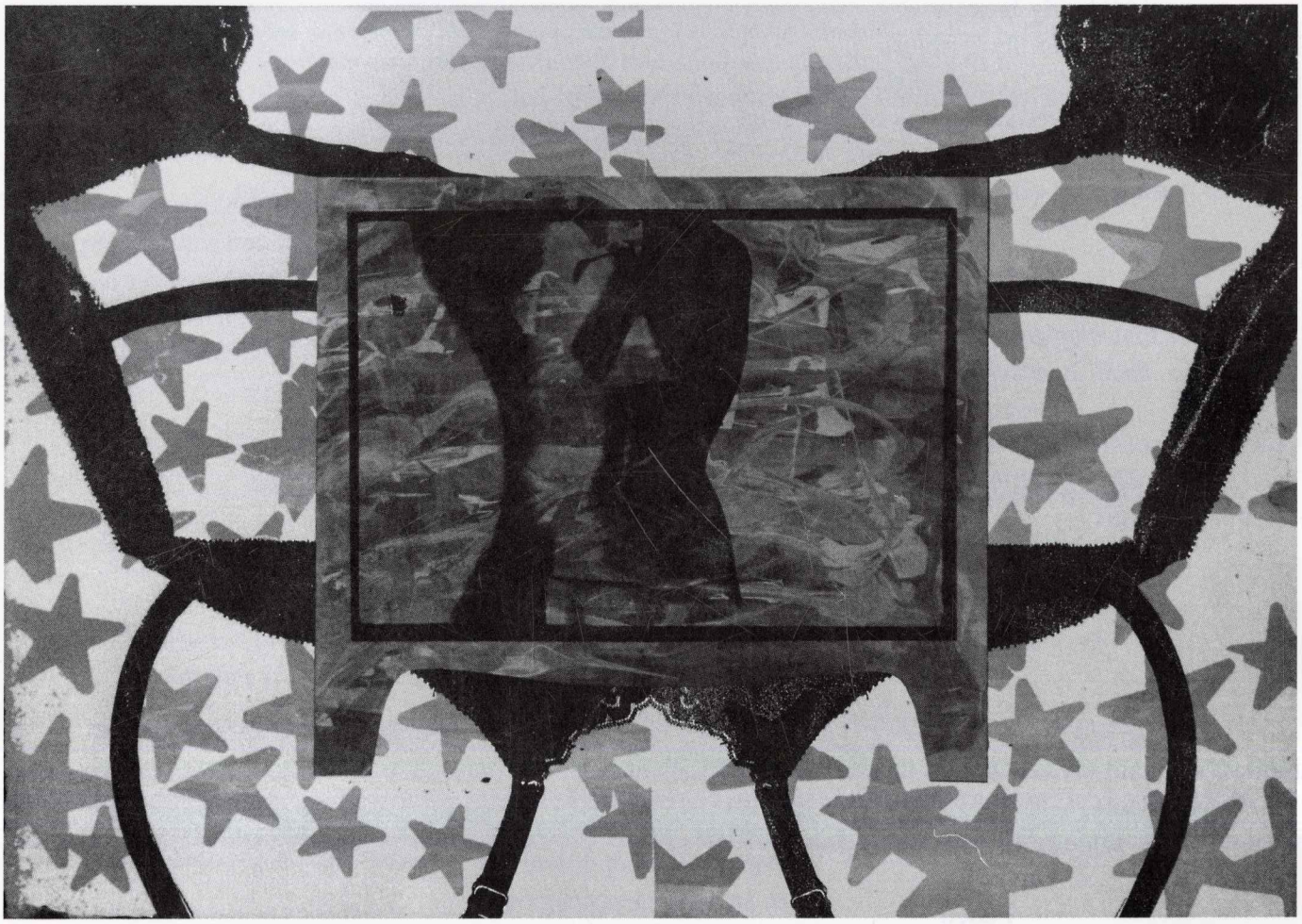
BABS
(Says slightly sarcastically) No reason, Bubba.

BUBBA
Well's I've been going to college now for four years and next semester I's finally goin' to be a sophomore. My family's real proud of me. They's never did gradiate high school neither.

BABS
(Slightly disgusted) What a surprise. (Grabbing her purse) Bubba, would you excuse me for a minute? I need to run powder my nose.

BUBBA
Sure thing, lil darlin'. Hey, when ya git back could ya give me about fifty bucks? I left all my money back at the house.

BABS
(Syrupy sweet) Oh sure, I could do that. See you in a minute. (She turns, walks toward the bathroom door, then slips toward the exit when Bubba isn't looking). Oh God, please don't let him have my phone number. (She runs out of the restaurant).



Untitled Painting
Patrick Mayton

I Smell Like McDonald's

Jonathan Scott

I smell of residue fries and the delinquent breadings of
McChicken filets -
Those that escape the Bastillian confines of waffled metal baskets and
indolently burrow
to the stainless
steel bottoms
Of mass produced cauldrons of bubbling
and burnt vegetable derivatives
Left to cook and re-cook themselves to a state of doneness far exceeding the sufficient
and recommendable
degree prescribed by the FDA
And compound and re-compound their malodorous waftings--
Those that employ the singular agenda of cross-stitching
their dreadfully foul and
deeply fried threads of stench
Into my---recently-Downy-fresh-downright-fashionable-used-to-reside-on-an-eclectic-rack-of-equally-swank-cotton-polyester-blends-supplied-by-a-feverishly-dainty-kiosk-at-the-mall---t-shirt

So when I got back in my car
Having gone none too far
I realize, disgruntled
I smell like McDonald's

I smell of stagnant breath and the indecorous belchings of
paper plants
And not entirely unnoticeable is the essence of
Fart
Faded
Blue jeans--these that snugly hug these insidiously indiscreet forms of
Bobs and Lous and Barbs and Sues
With their clearly defined asses and their 501 world views--
Those that recommend euphemized euphemisms and refried clichés to their speech
(Which is staining my T-shirt with
Spearminted
Nutra-sweeted
Beer-battered
Babbling)

Causing a certain nausea that hearkens me back to. . .

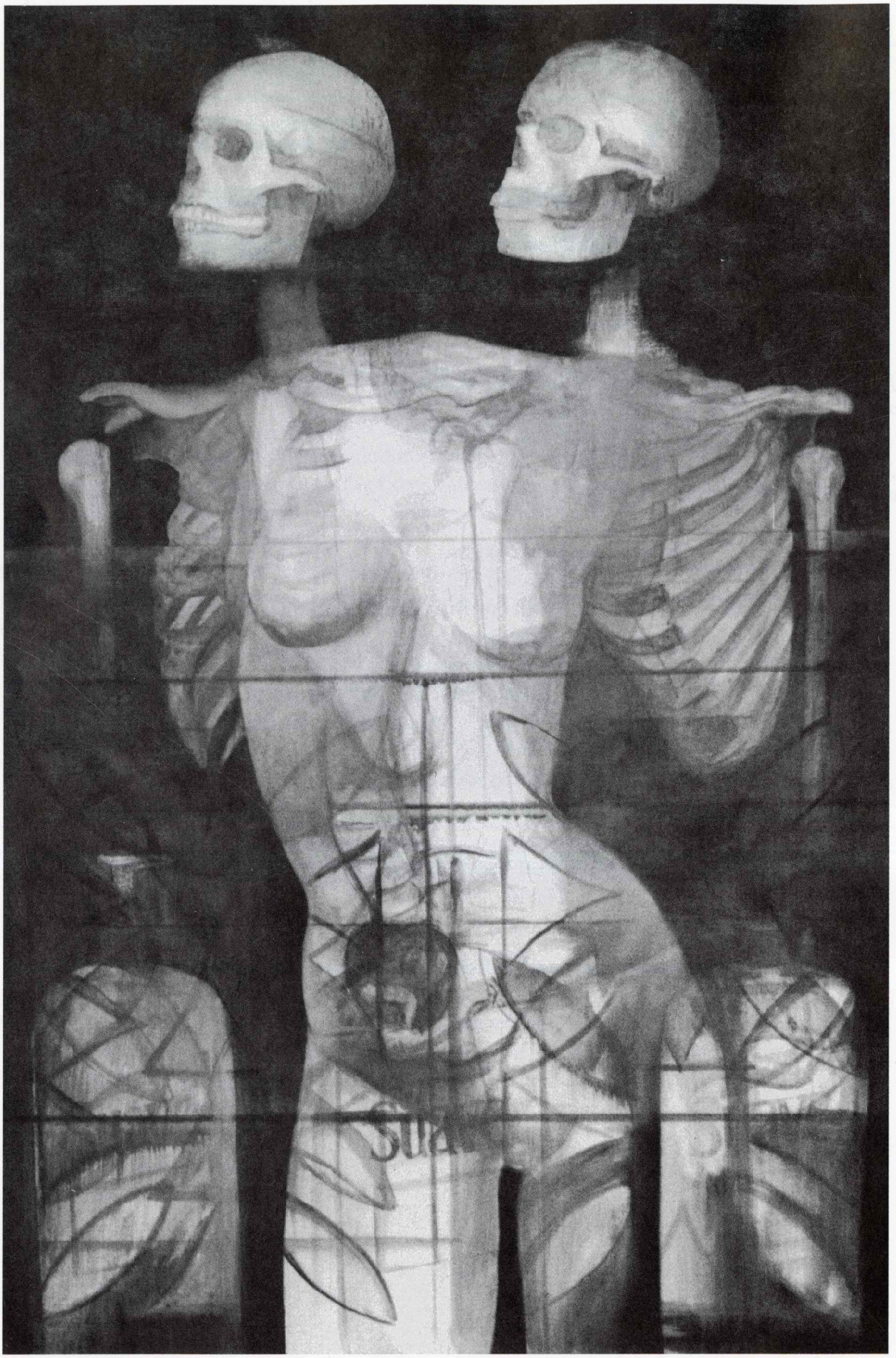
D H
L E C E
O N R S
G A , CAPITALIST sLAUGHTER HOUSES,

And an education that almost gave me enough information to make myself barely intelligible,
A significant and salient reek that sends me hurtling back to my
domestically remodeled foreign automobile where the radio plays the
Forgotten hymn of this republic. . .

"So dutiful to gracious lies, that amber waves have stained
For purple sultan's amnesty, we trade polluted grains
America, America--God dreads to face your sea
I'll take your goods, like no brother should
From thee to pining me"

We have our helter skelts,
and our rabbit pelts,
and our Bible belts (with their story boards of felt)
We drink our triple secs,
Join duplicitous sects,
Enjoy single sex (yet still we're perplexed)
How April's precipitation brings May's vegetation but for the rest of the year
Mother [ill] Nature and Father [wasted] Time
Lullaby us To sleep And then tie us To the trees of our bias
And when we wake up we're Dead!

So I wake up in my car
Having gone now too far
I recognize and swear at the
Smell of America



Untitled Painting
Brian Baugh

The Death of Phaethon

You were an artist.
I'll frame this in language
you know too well:

Our sacred scene remains,
the kids all bounce their silly balls
in those same timeless shoes.
Convenient stars dust the Pollack sky
while daily revolutions
usher in another frantic chariot race.

East on our sacred scene
we cast our roles, and play for another episode.
Some kids make clever escape,
grab the reigns with furious hands,
and force day through
with a mighty thunder-spark finale.

Few hear the mercury horse-hoof rhythms.
Fewer catch the ride
(I missed mine, still do sometimes),
but no one tames those fiery steeds
as now we understand.

And down below the silent sky,
the lonely kyknos cry and cry.

By Jeremy Lespi

To the family of a dead bug

To the family of a dead bug, I write,
I'm sorry to bring you this news.
Your grandfather, brother, son, or dad
Has taken his very last view
Of my windshield in fact
That's what he saw
Just as the window had started to thaw.

I never saw him coming!
I swear to the event,
Flying alone into my window he smashed and
Felt nothing as his buggy life went
Away from this world,
And far, far away.
Karma has given him a new one today.

As soon as it happened
I began to think,
Where had he been going
This night that was bleak
And dark, oh so dark--
I could hardly see
Myself through the darkness as he couldn't see me.

To the family of a dead bug, I write,
You must believe he would have put up a fight
If only he'd seen me or I had seen him;
Believe when I say my lights were on dim!
But I hope you understand as I anxiously ask
That you and your friends help me scrape him off the glass!

By Christy Ragland

The Darkness that Cleans

I.
I think about you at night
when every house I pass stares at me,
when all the window lights blink at my goings.
At night when I'm the only one on Earth,
at night, the moon glowing green against black road --
I think about one hundred-fifty miles stopping my circulation,
a network of pavement wrapped around my head.
Red blood pushing slower through miniature tubes
Red blood slipping through straws slipping through my hands.
Sun red hands cast white in neon street lights.

II.
Tonight the moon promises rain --
I watched her lips move soft against stained dark sky.
Rain to push the world away,
I close my eyes and see it:
A hundred rivers washing me clean,
a hundred oceans that bathe the dark self.
Tonight I change colors with the tide,
tonight I slide up against your side.

III.
My eyes shine at night like cat's eyes,
sinister oval-eyes gleaming as beacons
gleaming as lighthouses during your worst storm.
My eyes move quick, they dance with bonfires,
I think they are dancing with you --
we move as shadows move over black streets
the way I move at night.
The way my arm bends in wet moonlight
signs out your name.

IV.
Who are you? Your mouth sings a prayer,
holy water streams down your face.
A face built of marble and stone
the mortar racing up cathedral spires and ends.
Church bells behind your eyes ring,
the sound fills my ears, chokes my throat
when you pull away.
Pull -- the veins in your arms wither with Easter flowers
and you are gone.
Your image on a postcard at my feet,
damp cardboard destroyed, the rain water pulls you away.

By Alan Riquelmy

The Kiss

By Candice Elaine Whiting

The night had all the romance of Paris on a cool, summer evening. The night sky was clear and the moon shone bright. The stars twinkled blissfully above. The cool breeze blew my hair every few moments, gently and smoothly. The band could be heard on the balcony, but more enchanting was the song of the crickets chirping in the night. We looked over the ledge onto the pond, watching the moonlight dance in the ripples of the breeze. It was a scene from a movie.

He was laughing. I was laughing. We were both smiling. We were bewitched. He commented on my dress and hair, and I blushed. I laughed at his every joke, even though they weren't all funny. He watched my every move and claimed to be paying attention to all my words. I listened to his stories and claimed to be interested. His hand slipped around my waist, and he moved closer. He whispered into my ear and smelled my perfume.

"You know, you aren't making this easy."

I laughed.

"You are so wonderful. I am having the best time tonight."

I blushed.

His hand touched my cheek, bringing my face closer to his. Our lips met for a brief moment, a butterfly kiss, gentle and sweet. He pulled back and smiled. I remained still and lost feeling in my toes.

I didn't see fireworks. I may have lost feeling in my toes, but I gained an enormous sensation in my stomach. Not the sensation of butterflies, but the sensation of an eighteen wheel truck rolling through me with the speed of lightning, destroying anything and everything in its way.

"Oh my gosh. I think I am going to be sick."

"It's okay. We are all nervous after the first kiss. Don't worry, you were great. I really enjoyed it."

"No, I really think I am going to be sick."

Thank heavens for the potted green plant to the left. The excitement and emotion packed within that kiss came rushing out of my lips. It came raging along with dinner. Thankfully, the emotion and excitement didn't meet his lips, but rather met the damp soil of the lovely potted green plant on the balcony.

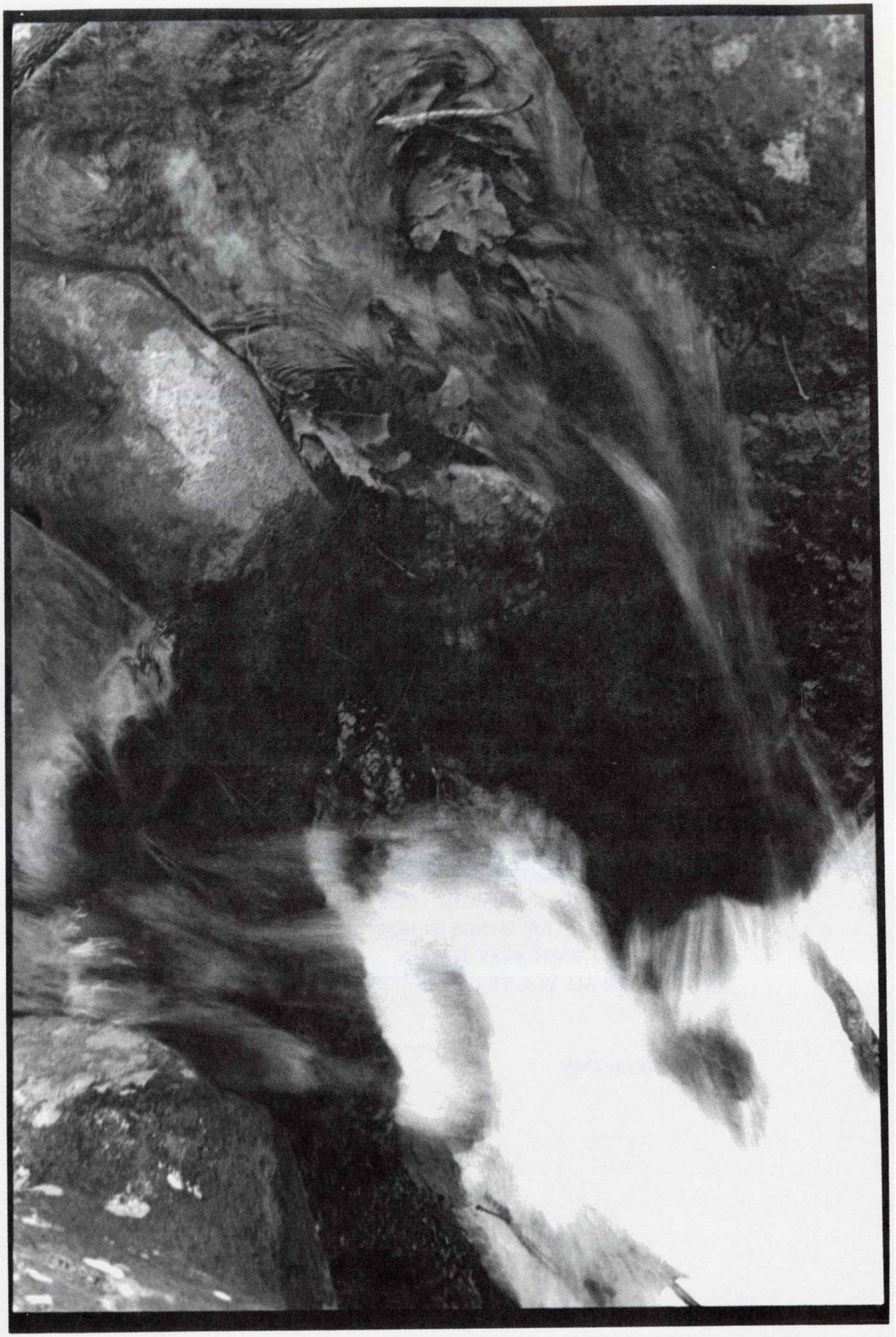
Untitled Photo
Deena Haynes

Paved coffins line the cobble stone stone streets,
Rock hard passions pounded under my feet,
I gritted my teeth and begged for more,
That solid soul of existence, The city that sins,
The angels that falls,
The savior screams,
My favorite angel screams,
Gracious and fallen,
We are all just stalling for the day we find our true name,
Nothing,
Beyond Eden,
Beyond the venom that poisons my veins and castrates my games,
Beyond Creation,
Sensual sensation,
Never even,
The moon screamed And I came

By Jon Schoening

WHEN I LOOK INTO THE MIRROR
JUST CAN'T BELIEVE WHAT I DO SEE
THERE'S NO WAKEN TO THIS NIGHTMARE
AND YOUR LOST IN YOUR REALITY
SO TELL ME ALL YOUR REALITY
SO YOU TELL ME ALL YOUR SECRETS'
AND YOU TELL ME THAT YOUR INNOCENT
THERE'S SOMETHING IN YOUR EYES I CAN SEE
AND MY FACE KEEPS LOOKING BACK AT ME
YOU CONFESS YOU CAN'T HELP YOURSELF
CAN'T SLEEP AT NIGHT
YOU CAN'T GO ON
YOUR POSSESSED, YOU CAN'T FOOL YOURSELF
YOUR THE CRIME AND YOU CAN'T GO ON
ANOTHER DAY, ANOTHER SORROW
NO TODAY AND TOMORROW
TRY AND WASH AWAY THE SHAME
AND YOU SMILE IN YOUR PICTURE FRAME
YOU HAD A CHARMED LIFE
BUT YOU FELL FROM GRACE
AND YOU LOVED ON WITHOUT A TRACE
YOUR ALL ALONE AND WONDER WHY
AND YOU LAUGH WHEN YOU WANT TO CRY
AND YOU CAN'T GO ON
YOU CAN'T GO ON
SO CUT YOUR STRAIGHT LINES ON THE MIRROR
AND DIP YOUR HANDS IN HOLY WATER
TRY TO WASH AWAY THE SIN
CAUSE ALL YOU'VE GOT IS YOUR FATHER'S RAIN

By Jay Daly



Untitled Photo
Alan Cecil

Man Against Beast

Spear in hand he stands
Wrapped in red
And ready for red to flow
Muscles pulse with anticipation
Eyes squint to hide Fear

It feeds on gazelle
Rips and tears, limb from limb
Nose buried in bloody stomach
Until. . . noise!

Claw ready she lowers
Smeared in red
And ready for red to flow
Muscles pulse with anticipation
Eyes squint to hide Fear

It stands, breathing
Tall, dark, barefoot
Scraping stone against blade
Until. . . silence!

Clenching teeth causes tightened cheek
Wicked snarl shows foaming gum

The charge.
The pounce.
The kill.

By Alice Bickley

nights like this
my thoughts rise
only to be caught up,
tangled within
paradigms of a living room

ideas and visions
effervesce from my skin
crawling like time-resistant slugs
ooze slimy trails - vertical residue on a wall
they gather on the ceiling
collect and disintegrate

gravity claims others
fragments drop and vanish
lay writhing on the carpet
maybe crushed under a foot
which, once lifted
leaves an invisible shoe
a reminder
to be re-discovered and stumbled over
someday

still a few
hungry for life
escape
a wisp rising from a chimney
laughter heard through a keyhole
warm breath exhaled
a mouth pressed against a dusty vent

even these, meeting a graveyard sky
crowded with other survivors
will sense their nothingness

underneath it all
perhaps hiding behind a curtain
peeking, two eyes an existence away
I envy at their freedom

for in infinite nothingness, I see
infinity

By Jeremy Lespi

Satin children line the streets,
The season of harvest has begun,
Giving themselves communion despite the rekindled heat,
"Forever, Forever we will climb our mountain,"
"Eternal, Eternal we will render our earthly weaknesses and
strive to kiss the angels,"
"Heaven is absolute,"
Trembling hands, rattling chains,
The holy organ is unordained,
Teary eye, empty sky,
No angels to answer the child's cry,
Tonight behind the hanging sympathetic clouds the stars
are soon to be ripe for the plucking,
Hopeless dreams, slaughtered little things,
Can your mother be forgiven for having a selfish breast?
Sleep dear child sleep, in heaven you shall soon run with
unshackled feet,
Like your maker intended,
Angry hoofed beast storm the streets,
Yearning to trample the painted faces,
One by one the victory has been won.

By Jon Schoening

The Expansion of the Bee Dreamer

sunlight on the savannah
tight wrap of a stiff sari
scent of Bushman leather
wild laughter in a Picadilly pub

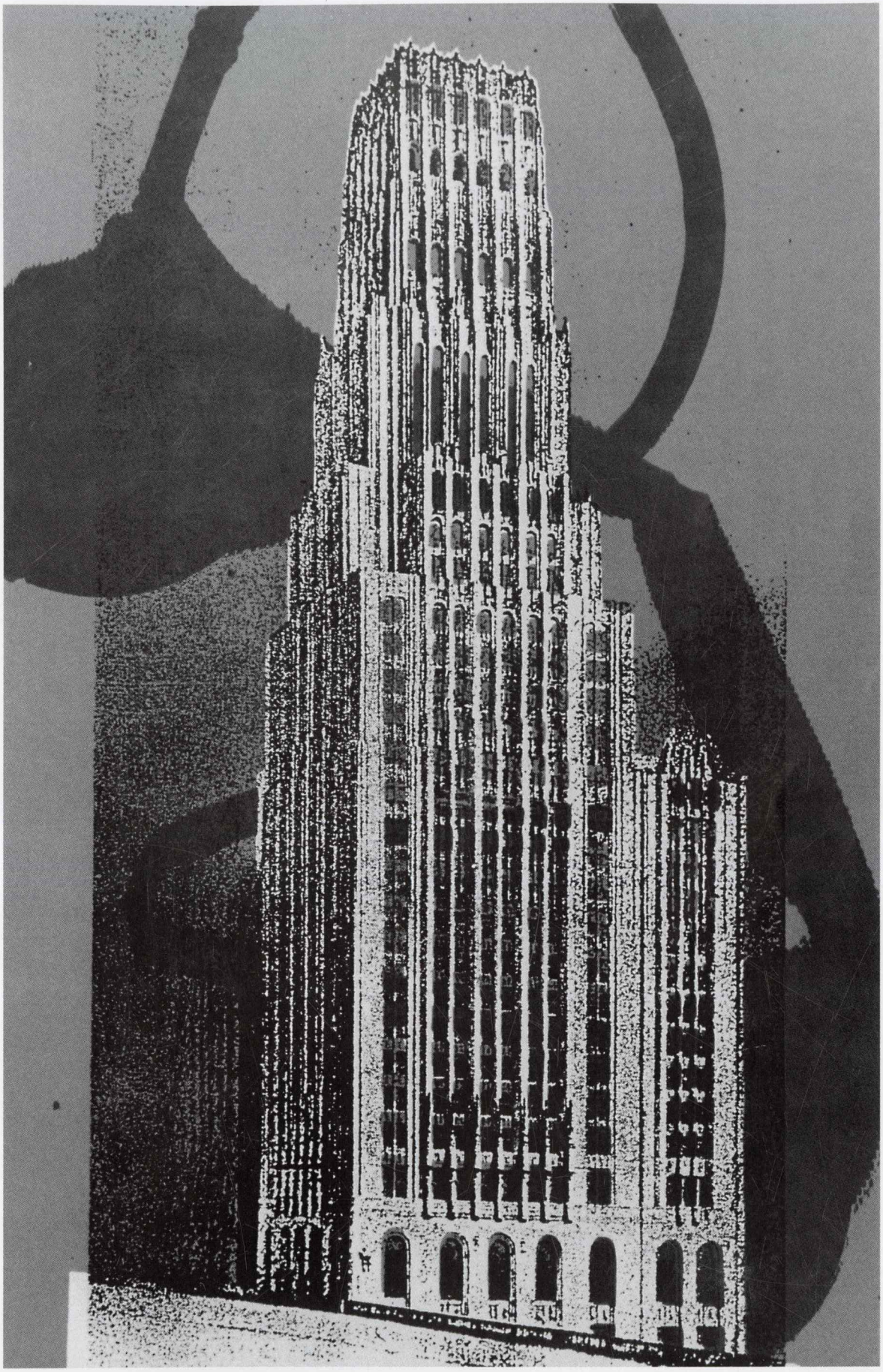
monotonous rhythm of rikshaw feet
dancing of tropical sea suds
haunting chime of the Clock
moaning of the hidden hippo

broadway's flashing lights
salty sweat of a trek
foreboding stomp of a soldier
sweet opium poisoning the air

ALL THIS
seen in the mumbled thoughts of a honeycomb madman
who slothfully sips his saccharine substance.
He stares at me from a sturdy kitchen stool
with jabbering mouth and glazened eye.
His hand rubs swollen stings,
using pink Caladryl and ice.

And out of the air, he says
"The bees would enjoy the flight."
"WHAT BEES?"
Saccharine substance on his mind
Wishing he could take his hives
out of Katmandu, Manhattan, and Maasai.

By Alice Bickley



Untitled Drawing
Patrick Mayton

November

is a picture of an empty canvas
thick carbon between leather fingers.
It is a wet brush,
lyme streaking over empty days.
Empty. The month makes a silent sound
discolored leaves flaking to dead ground.
November coughing cancer,
lit Camel on the lips and a blank painting
that a thousand Karens couldn't muse.
A thousand black and white girls stuck on film,
their mouths caught in half frowns
their lips formed in mid-sentence
asking you what the cruelest month is.

By Alan Riquelmy

me? who?
I, you
we, two
perpetually giving birth to one another
I die thousands of times throughout the day
and you?
my "time" of course,
relative to your "day"
it's a divergent of repeated fates
it's me, you
we, two
in confusion
in ecstasy

By Jeremy Lespi